

### **F-03: A sociological study of an inland fishing community: a case study of Kandalama**

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Sri Lanka has a tremendous potential for inland aquaculture practices and a considerable number of fishing families are engaged in this field. However, in comparison to other developing countries, there is no documentation on evaluation of the socio-economic aspects of their lives. This study was carried out among the inland fishermen in the Kandalama reservoir in the North Central Province in Sri Lanka.

The objective of the study was to investigate the socio-economic status of this inland fishing community, with special reference to inland fishing activities as well as their pattern of social behaviour.

Most of the information was based on the usual anthropological methods such as participant observation, interviews and casual conversations.

Participant observation was made by daily participating in the activities of the inland fishing communities during the study period, gathering information on their socio-economic aspects. In the preliminary survey, 60 inland fishing families were identified randomly and individual data was collected.

After completion of this survey, 15 characteristic inland fishing families were identified to collect financial data and catch data during the period March 1994 to February 1995.

Thirty inland fishing families were selected randomly out of the 60, by using the random sampling method to conduct in-depth studies. The questionnaire was prepared according to the previous information obtained from the sample survey. The socio-economic survey was conducted to determine their family size, income levels, savings, housing facilities, educational levels and sanitation facilities.

A number of conversations were also made with knowledgeable people and authorized personnel to collect historical data and other relevant information on inland fisheries.

The results indicated that there were 2 types of inland fishermen in Kandalama reservoir. There are 66.69% full time inland fishermen and 33.33% part time inland fishermen. The full time fishermen totally depend on fishing activities while part time fishermen were engaged in agriculture as another income source.

The majority of inland fishermen do not have their own land, although they utilized crown land for agriculture purposes and some fishermen worked as daily paid labourers in neighbouring agricultural farms.

The living conditions of inland fishermen were poor and most of the houses were constructed using 75% clay. 70% of inland fishermen were engaged in the fishery without their own boat facilities, as well as other fishing gear such as nets, traps etc.

The standard of education in this community was rather low and 16% had not attended school. Income levels of 2 fishing community types showed various differences in their annual income. Results indicated that the average daily income for inland fishermen fluctuated between Rs.50 to Rs.100 during the study period. Most of the fishermen used less than 10.6 cm, mesh size nets, neglecting the government regulations and also other illegal fishing methods.

The fishermen who are engaged in fishing activities in this reservoir lack proper fishing gear and therefore it is recommended to supply materials at subsidized prices through government departments or fisheries societies. Development of infrastructure facilities such as housing, road development and education system will improve their social status.